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ROBERT S. PEABODY FOUNDATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

ANNUAL REPORT
1955

PHILLIPS ACADEMY

Andover, Massachusetts

January 6, 1956

Mr. John M. Kemper
Clerk of the Board of Trustees
Phillips Academy
Andover, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Kemper:

During the year 1955 The Robert S. Peabody Foundation continued in its role as coordinator and moderator of collaborative attacks on archaeological problems of unusually broad scope. Beginning in 1939, research on the Boylston Street Fishweir pointed the way for collaboration among somewhat diverse scientific fields. This continued over the years and in 1948 an expedition to the Yukon constituted a practical field demonstration of the way in which three scientific fields could work together in order to solve mutual problems. In the same year, the method of radiocarbon dating developed by Dr. Willard F. Libby gave rise to problems in collaboration among archaeology, botany, and the earth sciences on the one hand, and chemistry and physics on the other. Due to his experience in analogous situations, Mr. Johnson was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Radioactive Carbon 14 which was charged with marshalling both geological and archaeological samples for assay by Dr. Willard F. Libby at the time that the technique was being developed. Mr. Johnson prepared a chapter entitled "The Significance of the Dates for Archaeology and Geology" for the 1951 edition of Dr. Libby's RADIOCARBON DATING: for the 1955 edition, he prepared one entitled "Reflections Upon the Significance of Radiocarbon Dates."

By 1954 confusion in the field arose because of expanding interest and increase not only in the number of dating laboratories, but also in the number of questions concerning the interpretation of results. In

order to clarify the situation, Mr. Johnson organized a Conference on Radiocarbon Dating held that year under the sponsorship of the Peabody Foundation, the National Science Foundation and the National Research Council. At the same time, scientists in Europe were conferring. They laid plans for a second conference to be held in Cambridge, England, July 21-25, 1955. Mr. Johnson was invited to attend and to present a paper.

Both conferences have proved so successful that those who attended requested that another conference be held and that interested scholars from all countries be invited. Plans are now practically complete and an International Conference on Radiocarbon Dating will be held at Phillips Academy October 1 to 4, 1956. Participants will be archaeologists, botanists, chemists, geologists, and physicists from five European countries and from the United States, Canada, and probably Mexico. Application has been made to the National Science Foundation for \$11,500.00 to defray the costs of the conference, and we have every reason to expect that the application will be acted on favorably. The National Science Foundation and The Peabody Foundation will sponsor the Conference and the latter will act as host.

Items for the Agenda being developed by Mr. Johnson, in collaboration with a few selected scientists from several fields, involve some unique combinations of physical, radiochemical, geochemical and geological data. The conference also provides for a discussion of correlations of European and American Pleistocene strata. This latter is a new arrangement of available data. Perhaps the greatest effort is being expended upon archaeological sessions which will be in effect an attempt to reconstruct on a broad scale the manner in which aboriginal American cultures became established on the continent. This will involve discussion of continent-

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wide archaeological phenomena on a scale never before attempted. Plans for a preliminary discussion of certain points at a special conference to be held in May are now being seriously considered. The discussions will include critical consideration not only of cultural status and inferred societal organization of the peoples under review, but also of dates assigned them, and the means by which these dates were arrived at. Attention will be focussed on the simple hunting-gathering cultures on the one hand, and, on the other, on the hunters of big game, such as the American elephants and extinct giant bison. Although it has been generally and popularly held that big game hunters were the first people to cross into the New World from Asia, there is an increasing and undeniable body of evidence to show that people with an unspecialized economy based on the hunting of small game and the gathering of wild foods were also on the continent at an early time. It is intended that archaeologists and geologists at the conference will examine particularly carefully the proposition that techniques for hunting big game may have arisen from a less specialized hunting-gathering way of life when herds of large animals were encountered. Could it be shown that such a development might have occurred, it would cause wide-spread revision in anthropological thinking.

A conference of archaeologists who have been studying just such unspecialized hunting-gathering cultures was held at the time of the annual meetings of the Society for American Archaeology, at Bloomington, Indiana, in May. These cultures, which were first recognized in eastern North America, have been known as the Archaic cultures, but it is only recently that some archaeologists have begun to see the possibility of a connection amongst them. According to this point of view, the Archaic cultures may represent the comparatively unaltered line of descent from an ancestral hunting and gathering people, while the hunting of big game

was a technique which either occupied only certain tribes who specialized in this activity, or certain members of the tribe. Differences among the Archaic cultures would then be seen as the result of the retention or the abandonment of practices in the face of differences of environment. For example, people who were originally wood workers and canoists would be unlikely to retain either skill if they settled in Nevada, while they might be expected to expand both if they settled on coastal British Columbia. Whatever the case, there is so little real information on this score that a concerted attack on the problem seemed worth while.

Because there was no clear directive for the organization of this conference, adequate preparation in many departments was lacking, and as a result the discussions were exploratory and concerned with definitions. This was of interest and value, but no specific results can be cited. Mr. Byers, who had been concerned with the attempt to organize the conference, was elected chairman after the meeting convened. At the same time, Mr. Johnson was elected recording secretary. Many papers prepared for the conference contained enough valuable material to warrant further work on them and subsequent publication as a volume. Furthermore, Mr. Johnson's notes, worked up into a rough draft, will furnish the basis for a summary of the discussions. Mr. Byers has been asked to see to the revision of papers and the preparation of the manuscript for publication.

Of more immediate value to the Foundation is the circumstance that both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Byers are working in fields which contribute greatly toward a fuller understanding not only of the collections under analysis for reports on field work, but also of the significance that can be attached to different facets of the new exhibitions being installed. For example, Mr. Johnson is not only reviewing the literature covering archaeological work in southern New England with an eye to

comparative material for the Titicut report, but also with the object of installing three exhibition cases that will interpret as fully as possible the growth of aboriginal cultures in the area. Much of the material with which he is working ties into both aspects of discussion of the Archaic cultures outlined above. This will contribute greater breadth to all undertakings. As a further example of the way in which such projects can gather momentum, we may cite Mr. Johnson's present analysis of the Torrey Collection and other material in storage for the purpose of isolating the various aspects of aboriginal cultural development and selecting specimens for display. It is possible that two important papers will result from his analysis of the collections. They will be suitable for publication in AMERICAN ANTIQUITY. One may record the general status of archaeological knowledge concerning southern New England, the other will report hitherto-unrecognized pottery types that are being isolated in the course of the work, and which are useful in the description of cultural development in the area.

This may be taken as a clear and rather simple exemplification of the way in which a research museum functions. Research, the preparation of materials for exhibition, the care of the collections, and the development of new ideas and theories which can give rise to worthwhile publications are all so closely interrelated that it is impossible to separate one from the other. Each activity supplies material for another, and at the same time is fed by other activities. As in any healthy organism, disruption of the cycle interferes with the well-being of the whole, and an inevitable interruption in productive work occurs before momentum can be gathered again.

During the last part of June and the month of July, Mr. Stoddard carried out a previously-outlined program of excavation at a shell heap

on Holt's Point, Bocabec, New Brunswick. We have alluded to this site and reasons for digging there in earlier reports, and will not expand on them here. Suffice it to say that with the assistance of graduate students from Harvard and local labor, the expedition successfully carried out the projected work, securing approximately 800 catalogued specimens. Among these there are 32 pebbles usually found in pairs, and bearing engraved geometrical patterns. This may be the first evidence from prehistoric times of a game similar to the dice games played by the Indians throughout North America in historic times.

Although it was not at first evident, analysis of his collection indicates that two cultural levels are represented by the remains at Holt's Point. This in itself is extremely valuable information, for it will permit us to place collections from other sites around Passamaquoddy and Cobscook bays in their proper order, and thus align with some degree of certainty prehistoric events in that area. Until the Foundation undertook its present research program in eastern Maine and New Brunswick in 1949, information regarding the archaeology of the area was extremely sketchy. For lack of specific data it was possible to fit the area into the complex story of the growth of culture in North America in only the most general way. Connection with specific cultural developments in adjacent New England could only be inferred. The data from Holt's Point, applied to existing data, now makes it possible to distinguish points that are in need of further elucidation, and to formulate problems deserving more detailed research.

We have previously referred to Mr. Stoddard's study of the pottery gathered from shell heaps in Maine by Mr. Moorehead. This ties directly into studies of collections from recently excavated sites in Maine and New Brunswick, and will provide a valuable body of comparative material for studies of pottery from southern New England which Mr. Johnson

contemplates. The importance of pottery in this connection may be traced to the fact that methods of manufacture, as well as forms and decorative techniques employed by the potter indicate with a high degree of certainty the source of some influences and the origin of at least some of the elements involved in the growth of aboriginal culture. Since it is reasonably imperishable, pottery is one of the few keys to the aesthetic side of culture that are available to the archaeologists in the northeast.

Mr. Stoddard has been analyzing the collection which he and R. H. Dyson gathered at Richibucto, New Brunswick, in 1950, during the North-eastern Archaeological Survey. A brief report on this site, occupied by Micmac Indians who apparently continued to use stone tools until the nineteenth century, should be ready to go to press in 1956. This, combined with Mr. Sargent's report on his archaeological survey in New Hampshire, the study of pottery referred to above, and Mr. Stoddard's report on his investigations in eastern Maine and New Brunswick, will comprise Volume 6 of the Papers of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology.

During late August, Mr. Byers made a preliminary test in a shell heap which had been reported to him. The heap, which is located on an island in Blue Hill Bay, exhibits conditions which are not easily interpreted. During the last week in September, Mr. and Mrs. Byers and Mr. Johnson returned to the island to make further tests. From evidence gathered by these tests, it is evident that the Foundation should make plans to put a crew to work at the site during the summer of 1956. This will involve maintaining a camp and a crew on the island, with consequent problems of logistics. However, there appears to be a chance that a crew working under careful control can secure evidence of the way in which the shell heap was built up, and at the same time,

recover some indication of the aboriginal settlement pattern. Since information of this sort has not been recorded previously in the Northeast, the site may well prove to be one of the most important that has been reported. It is obvious that tangible evidence of such information cannot be recorded, as catalogued specimens are, but if we are successful in our search, such information will not only provide the clue to unravel many puzzles in archaeological deposits, but will also give information for the first really authentic model of an Indian coastal community.

The Historic Sites Protection Act which was passed in the Province of New Brunswick in 1954 is designed to prevent excavation by untrained personnel at historic or anthropological sites. It not only provides for the designation of specified kinds of sites as historic or anthropological sites, but also prohibits persons from excavating at such sites without a permit from the Crown. Enforcement of the Act is in the hands of one of the Ministers of the Crown, acting on the advice of the Historic Sites Advisory Board. It was not possible to ascertain the steps to be taken before a permit for the 1955 season could be obtained, because the necessary machinery had not been set up, and there was no guide to the interpretation and enforcement of the Act. In September the Minister of the Crown, concerned with the enforcement of the Act, instructed Dr. W. A. Squires, of the New Brunswick Museum, St. John, to organize the Historic Sites Advisory Board. Dr. Squires then asked us for a brief statement of the work which the Foundation had carried on in New Brunswick, and an outline of our plans for the future to be used as a guide by the Board in formulating policy concerning the Act. We prepared such a statement together with a brief discussion of the main features of northeastern archaeology and problems involved in archaeological research. At the first meeting of the Board, Dr. Squires, who is its chairman, presented the entire letter. He reports that the Board found the letter

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most helpful, and that the Board recommended to the Minister that sites at which the Foundation planned to conduct major excavations be set aside as anthropological sites in order to protect the interests of the Peabody Foundation and the Province. It was also recommended that the Foundation be permitted to take archaeological collections from New Brunswick for purposes of study, provided that after analysis was completed and a report prepared, a representative collection be returned to a designated institution. It is gratifying to report such cordial relations between the Foundation and the Historic Sites Advisory Board. The same cordial relations exist with the New Brunswick Museum, and even now Mr. Stoddard and Mr. J. Russell Harper are working over certain mutual problems. There is a possibility that such collaboration may lead to even greater advances in archaeological knowledge than we had thought possible a short time ago. It is particularly pleasing to be able to report that the Foundation is working with other people and institutions, rather than competing with them as was universally the case in archaeological research not so many years ago.

In the Museum itself, we can report progress in the new exhibition hall. We have finished the introductory case except for some finishing touches that can only be supplied by an artist. Mr. Johnson has designed and installed the "mock up" of the exhibition which will describe the Boylston Street Fishweir. As has been noted above, he is now at work on three other cases concurrently. It is likely that most of this material will be ready for Mr. Johnson to begin installation within the next three months. Mr. Byers has been working on the exhibition of material from the ancient site on Bull Brook, in Ipswich, but has been prevented from doing very much until recently, when the collectors brought in enough specimens to permit an adequate display. Eventually the services of a draftsman and artist will be required so that the

material may be made presentable to the public.

From his contact with anthropology and archaeology on a broad scale, Mr. Johnson has acquired a background which enabled him to prepare a general article on American Archaeology for the Penguin Book Company of England, and an article on Anthropological Professional Organizations for the YEARBOOK OF ANTHROPOLOGY, 1955, published by the Wenner-Gren Foundation. During the winter he also organized a symposium on Salvage Archaeology for presentation at the annual meetings of the Society for American Archaeology in Bloomington, Indiana, in May. Papers presented at this symposium will be published as a separate volume during the winter of 1956.

In our annual report for 1954 we reported that Dr. A. V. Kidder had turned once again to a study of the data gathered at Pecos between 1915 and 1935. This new study was intended to be concerned only with the ceremonial rooms or kivas uncovered at the pueblo. However, the scope of the work has gradually increased, and it is evident that before he is through, Dr. Kidder will have completed a work which will evaluate the position of Pecos as an intermediary between the stable farming communities of the southwest, and the hunters of the high plains of Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas. We continue to type up manuscript as it is prepared, some of the drawings and plans have been made, but there is no indication as yet as to the date when the finished work will appear as Volume 5 of the Papers of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology. Because of the anticipated size of the manuscript and the number of illustrations involved, we have tentatively set aside \$3000 for its publication.

During the year the Foundation has been represented at nearly all important scientific meetings. Unfortunately, one was scheduled on the weekend of the Andover-Exeter football game after we had already been

committed to the entertainment of returning alumni. However, the staff attended the annual meetings of the Society for American Archaeology, at Bloomington, Indiana, in May, and the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association in Boston in November. Mr. Byers and Mr. Johnson also went to the dinner of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research at which the Viking Medal is presented each year to the outstanding contributor in each of the fields of archaeology, cultural anthropology and physical anthropology.

The staff have also been ready to cooperate with persons and groups seeking speakers or advice. Mr. Johnson spoke before the Warren K. Moorehead Chapter of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society on the importance of the Titicut site which the members had helped to excavate. He also appeared in Equity Session of the Suffolk County Court as a witness for the Society for the Preservation of Dighton Rock which is endeavoring to prevent the removal of this historic rock from its present location. Mr. Byers has talked before the Danvers Historical Society, the Concord Lion's Club, and the Worcester Archaeological Society. He and Mr. Stoddard have also appeared as guests on a radio program over station WHDH. Dr. Stransky of the Arnold Arboretum has consulted with Mr. Byers on matters concerning the distribution of certain forest types in the northeast in prehistoric times. Dr. Howard Winters, of the Anthropology Museum of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois, spent a number of days here examining our collections in search of material for comparison with collections from Archaic sites in Illinois. There have been the usual number of calls to see objects of supposedly great importance. Although none of these led to anything, one never knows what may turn up, and so the Foundation makes a point of listening to everyone who claims to have something interesting.

The Foundation has continued to act as the meeting place for the

Northeastern Chapter of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society. This group meets here once a month during the school year in order to conduct the business of the chapter, engage in discussion and exchange of information, to hear a speaker who may treat a subject completely foreign to the area of immediate interest, and for a social half hour after the meeting adjourns. Mr. Stoddard and Mr. Byers have been primarily concerned with this group. It is a pleasure to be able to report that new and able officers of the group are at last leading its efforts along the lines of intelligent archaeological research. One of the present Chapter projects involves a listing of all archaeological sites in its field of operations, an endeavor that the Foundation is glad to encourage by supplying the necessary topographic maps.

During the summer, men from the E. Van Noorden Company worked on the roof, replacing all the copper valleys, crickets and gutters, as well as broken slates wherever they were found. At the same time, men from the Runnells Construction Company, using the Van Noorden staging, pointed the masonry where it was needed, caulked around the windows, between wood and brick, and closed in the hole left by the removal of a large disused ventilator. The threat of Hurricane Diane made it advisable to take down the staging before work was completed in order to prevent possible damage to this or other buildings, and to re-erect it after all danger had passed. Total charge for this work, involving the taking down and re-erection of the staging came to \$9,455.08.

Although this has reduced our Reserve for Repairs to a distressingly large debit balance, the building is tight for the first time in many years. It can be kept so, provided that adequate maintenance work is done as it is needed, under a carefully worked out schedule. A larger Reserve for Repairs should be maintained, and greater allowance for maintenance made each year. It would be advisable to consider putting

some of this money aside in an account in the Savings Bank, with an eye to replacing the copper in another 35-40 years without curtailing so seriously the reserve funds of the Foundation.

During the year considerable time and energy on the part of the staff has been devoted to the preparation of various memoranda. This involved re-examination of the Deed of Gift, the Letter of Instructions, the Will of Robert S. Peabody, and such other papers as seemed to have bearing on the matter, together with a careful consideration of the background of the Foundation and Mr. Peabody's objectives. We prepared the following memoranda: a memorandum to Mr. Schereschewsky bringing him up to date on matters of policy covered in Annual Reports memoranda to Mr. Gould and Mr. Kemper, and correspondence with Mr. Philip L. Reed; a memorandum recounting conversations at a meeting on April 29, 1955; a memorandum to Mr. Kemper and the Trustees, dated June 7, 1955; and a letter to Mr. Kemper and the Trustees dated October 18, 1955.

Although Mr. Stoddard's collection from the Holt's Point dig was received during the year, it and the Knapton Collection, received in 1954, remain to be catalogued. In the Library we have accessioned 86 books, and have continued to receive the usual exchanges and periodicals. It is time for our annual card of thanks to Miss Eades and Mrs. Bloom, through whose interest and cooperation we have been able to keep our library in order. The importance of this library is steadily increasing, and we are now becoming one of the outstanding libraries as far as the Northeast is concerned. A small number of boys come over here to read from time to time, and we have a few visitors in search of books.

We regret to report that during the past twelve months we have had no less than three secretaries. This has interfered tremendously with the smooth operation of the museum, for we have no sooner trained one so

that she begins to understand what we are driving at, and the purpose of our catalogues, than she has left and we have had to start over again from scratch.

The museum has been kept open on Saturday and Sunday afternoons by Mr. Harry Chadwick. A small but steady number of visitors is in attendance, and the demand for postcards reflects their interest. Mr. Schofield has kept the interior of the building in A-1 condition and has at the same time been eager to help with the new installations. His cheerful cooperation and willingness to help with any task are greatly appreciated. Because of the extensive repairs to Peabody House and the increased use of the building by many groups, great demands have been made on his time. He has carried this extra load with unfailing good nature, but it is evident that he will not be able to continue this way without neglecting the museum.

It is a pleasure to submit this report of the year's progress.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas S. Byers

Douglas S. Byers
Director

